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Application : 10/840,076 **Examiner :** Auve **GAU :** 2111

From: DP **Location:** (IDC) FMF FDC **Date:** 3/9/06

Tracking #: epm 10/840,076 Week Date: 2/6/2006

DOC CODE	DOC DATE	MISCELLANEOUS
☐ 1449		☐ Continuing Data
☐ IDS		☐ Foreign Priority
☐ CLM		☐ Document Legibility
☐ IIFW		☐ Fees
☐ SRFW		☐ Other
☐ DRW		
☐ OATH		
☐ 312		
☒ SPEC	5/5/2004	

[RUSH] **MESSAGE:** please provide missing Application No. — and filed date on page 1 line # 6 of specification.

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REV 10/04

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR SWITCHING ON A VXS PAYLOAD MODULE

Related Applications

Related subject matter is disclosed in U.S. patent application entitled "VXS PAYLOAD MODULE AND METHOD" having application no. 10/839841 and filed on the same date herewith and assigned to the same assignee.

Background of the Invention

Expansion cards can be added to computer systems to lend additional functionality or augment capabilities. Current expansion cards interface and communicate with computer systems using primarily a multi-drop parallel bus network architecture, such as Peripheral Component Interconnect (PCI) or VERSAmodule Eurocard (VMEbus). A multi-drop parallel bus architecture has the disadvantage that it can only be used to support one instantaneous communication between modules in a computer system or network. However, some applications have requirements for simultaneous high bandwidth transfers between modules that cannot be handled by the multi-drop parallel bus architecture.

In the prior art, expansion cards, particularly mezzanine cards, are placed on payload modules mounted in chassis-type computer systems, such as VMEbus type systems known in the art. The prior art method of interfacing the expansion cards requires the payload module to manage the mezzanine cards through use of a processor and bus onboard the payload module. This adds complexity and expense when adding additional functionality to the chassis-type computer system. Therefore, it is desirable to provide expansion cards in a chassis-type environment that support high-speed data transfers, while minimizing the complexity and expense of controlling the expansion cards from the payload module.

Accordingly, there is a significant need for an apparatus and method that overcomes the deficiencies of the prior art outlined above.